to the soil in which plant roots are growing C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid.

11. The method of claim 10, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid contains a carbon atom constituting a carbonyl group and a carbon atom connected to a hydroxyl group, one of the above carbon atoms being located at the α or γ position with respect to the other carbon atom.

12. The method of claim 10, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid contains one to six carbon-carbon double bonds, such that the number of the double bonds does not exceed the number of carbon-carbon bonds in the ketol fatty acid.

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13. The method of claim 10, wherein the ketol fatty acid contains 18 carbon atoms, and two carbon-carbon double bonds.

14. The method of claim 10, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid is 9-hydroxy-10-oxo-12(*Z*),15(*Z*)-octadecadienoic acid.

15. A method for preventing dormancy of a plant comprising applying to the plant an agent comprising a C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein said agent is applied to the plant immediately after germination to prevent dormancy or to a dormant plant to terminate the dormancy.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid contains a carbon atom constituting a carbonyl group and a carbon atom connected to a hydroxyl group, one of the above carbon atoms being located at the α or γ position with respect to the other carbon atom.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid contains one to six carbon-carbon double bonds, such that the number of the double bonds does not exceed the number of carbon-carbon bonds in the ketol fatty acid.

19. The method of claim 15, wherein the ketol fatty acid contains 18 carbon atoms, and two

carbon-carbon double bonds.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid is 9-hydroxy-10-oxo-12 (*Z*),15 (*Z*)-octadecadienoic acid.

21. A method for enhancing tolerance of a plant against stress comprising applying to the plant an agent comprising a C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid.

22. The method of claim 21, wherein said agent is applied to a plant during or after germination of its seeds whereby to suppress plant stress.

23. The method of claim 21, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid contains a carbon atom constituting a carbonyl group and a carbon atom connected to a hydroxyl group, one of the above carbon atoms being located at the α or γ position with respect to the other carbon atom.

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24. The method of claim 21, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid contains one to six carbon-carbon double bonds, such that the number of the double bonds does not exceed the number of carbon-carbon bonds in the ketol fatty acid.

25. The method of claim 21, wherein the ketol fatty acid contains 18 carbon atoms, and two carbon-carbon double bonds.

26. The method of claim 21, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid is 9-hydroxy-10-oxo-12(*Z*),15 (*Z*)-octadecadienoic acid.

27. A method for promoting growth of a fungus comprising applying to the fungus a C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid.

28. The method of claim 27, wherein hyphae of the fungus are proliferated.

29. The method of claim 27, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid contains a carbon atom

constituting a carbonyl group and a carbon atom connected to a hydroxyl group, one of the above carbon atoms is located at the α or γ position with respect to other carbon atom.

30. The method of claim 27, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid contains one to six carbon-carbon double bonds, such that the number of the double bonds does not exceed the number of carbon-carbon bonds in the ketol fatty acid.

31. The method of claim 27, wherein the ketol fatty acid contains 18 carbon atoms, and two carbon-carbon double bonds.

32. The method of claim 27, wherein the C_4-C_{24} ketol fatty acid is 9-hydroxy-10-oxo-12 (*Z*),15 (*Z*)-octadecadienoic acid.